

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]

THE
CONFESSION

OF

SAINT PATRICK,

CONCERNING

HIS LIFE AND CONDUCT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN,

(As contained in an Ancient MS. over 1,000 years old.)

BY

ARCHDEACON HAMILTON,

PARISH PRIEST OF ST. MICHAEL'S.

DUBLIN:

JOHN CHARLES O'REILLY, PRINTER, 139 CAPEL-STREET.
1859.



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DEDICATION.

TO THE CATHOLIC PEOPLE

OF

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH.

MY DEARLY BELOVED PARISHIONERS,

To you, I dedicate this genuine work—THE CONFESSION OF ST. PATRICK. It was composed by the Saint, in his old age, shortly before his death, and may, therefore, be considered as the precious legacy of his own dying words. It is so much intermingled with the words of God, as contained in the Scriptures, that these holy words, thus seasoned, become more consoling and effective, by the circumstance of their being presented to us in this divine association. Read them, then, attentively and frequently; read them for your families, and for your household, and always believe, when you hear them, that you are listening to the instructions and exhortations, which our great Apostle, by his writings, continues, and ever will continue, to be preaching amongst us. Open then, as himself expresses it (p. 4)—open the ears of your heart, and listen with compunction to these fervent words, with which he confesses and deplores his transgressions, and the cause of them—p. 3.

“We had withdrawn from God, and did not keep his commandments, and were disobedient to his Priests, who advised us for our salvation.”

land. All this, indeed, was a great miracle in itself; but yet he appeals with confidence to the signs and wonders which have been shown him by the Lord.—page 19. In the very same manner, St. Paul declares his own preaching to have been, “not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the shewing of the spirit and power.”(a)

Again, p. 16, he says,

“I came to the Irish nation to preach the Gospel, and to endure reproach from unbelievers. I heard them upbraid me as a stranger, and I suffered many persecutions, even unto chains; and yet, I gave myself up, without reserve, for their advantage. And if I was held worthy, I am ready, immediately and cheerfully, to lay down my life for his name’s sake; and I desire to sacrifice myself, even unto death, if the Lord should demand it.”

With Apostolic disinterestedness and generosity he dispensed all these spiritual blessings and favours which he had received, for that purpose, from God. No avarice—no self-seeking—no remuneration did he accept or desire, but from the Lord. Himself assures us, p. 20—

“I circumvented no man; nor, on account of God and his Church, do I intend it, lest, through me, the name of God should be blasphemed, &c.

“I spent myself, that they might comprehend me; and every where among you, I advanced for your sakes, in many dangers, into distant regions, where nobody before had ever come to baptize them, or ordain them, or confirm their people in the faith. Now, all these things I did, by the grace of God, and cheerfully, for your salvation.”

Long before this, he had observed the same extreme caution, lest he should scandalize the weak; remembering the words of our Lord, “Woe be to

(a) 1 Cor. ii 4.

the world on account of scandals ;”(a) for we read, that when on his journey, he refused to eat the wild honey that was offered to him, believing it to have been offered or sacrificed to idols.(b)—p. 9.

His spirit of gratitude to the Lord was unbounded. p. 14, he says—

“Therefore, I give unceasing thanks to my God, who preserved me faithful in the day of temptation ; so that daily, with confidence, I offer sacrifice to him, and consecrate my soul a living victim to my Lord, who preserved me in all my trials ; so that I can say to him, ‘Who am I, O Lord, or what is my dessert, that you should have showered such graces on me ?’ This day will I extol and magnify thy name, where ever I may be, and this, not only in prosperity but adversity ; so that whatever may befall me, whether good or evil, I shall endure it with equanimity, always giving thanks to God.

“Wherefore, I give thanks to Him who has comforted me in all things, so as not to interfere with the journey I had resolved upon, nor with my purpose, which I had learned from my Lord ; but rather, I felt within me an uncommon strength, and my faith was approved before God and men.”—p. 13.

This faith, which he always confessed unto salvation, he thus places at the head of his book (p. 4), in the following words, not unworthy of the sentiments adopted in the year 325 by the Fathers of the Council of Nice—

“There neither is, nor was, nor will be, before, or since, any other God, except our unbegotten God, the Father, without beginning, from whom is all beginning. For by him all things, visible and invisible, were made. By him was begotten his consubstantial Son, who was made man, and who, having conquered Death, was assumed by his Father into Heaven. He gave him all power over every name(c), of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and in hell, that every tongue might confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father, whom we believe, and expect to

(a) Matt. xviii. 7.

(b) 1 Cor. x. 28, 29.

c) Phillip. ii. 9, 10, 11.

come, as the future judge of the living and the dead ; who will render to every one according to his works, and pour out abundantly upon us the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the pledge of Immortality—making those who believe and obey him, to become the Sons of God the Father, whom we confess and adore, as one God, in the Trinity of his holy Name.”

His lively hope of the Resurrection, and of all things good and everlasting, is expressed in these words, p. 23—

“For, without doubt, we shall all rise again on the last day, resplendent as the sun, in the glory of Jesus Christ, by whom we have been redeemed, and made co-heirs, like the Son of God, being made conformable to the creature of his image ; ‘for by Him, and in Him, and through Him, are all things. To Him be glory, for ever and for ever. Amen.’”(a)

His charity for God and man, every where, and expressly, in p. 23—

“And if, by imitation, I have done any good for my God, whom I love, I pray to him to give me grace to shed my blood for these converts and captives of his.”

In the very first word of his Confession (p. 3), by humility, he acknowledges himself an unlearned sinner, the least of all the faithful, and the most contemptible amongst many. And in p. 6—

“I blush, and very much do dread to discover openly my ignorance.”

In fine, in p. 23, he says—

“Behold I now commend my soul to my most faithful God, whose ambassador I am, though unworthy ; but he regards not the person, but has chosen me for his ministry, and has appointed me, one of the least of his servants, to discharge it.”

I must here, particularly draw your attention to that remarkable passage in the work of our Saint, wherein he speaks of the Monks and Virgins he had, during his ministry, consecrated to God.

In p. 17, he declares—

“That the sons of the Scots, and the daughters of their Kings, seem to be the monks and virgins of Christ; nay, even one Scotia, a blessed noble and beautiful young woman, was baptized by me; and after a few days, she addressed herself to me, and intimated she had received a warning from God’s messenger, who advised her to remain a virgin of Christ, and thus draw nigh to God. Thanks be to God, in six days after, she wisely and cheerfully laid hold of that grace, of which all virgins of God are alike partakers, but not, indeed, according to the wishes of their parents; yea, rather from them, do they suffer reproaches and persecutions unjustly, and, nevertheless, their number daily increases, so that we cannot keep an account of those of our nation who belong to Christ, not to speak of those who remain widows and unmarried. But even they labour much, who are confined in service, and who endure all things patiently, with threats and terrors. But the Lord gave this great grace to many of his handmaids, for, notwithstanding the prohibition, they courageously imitate the example.”

Now I shall advert to the pious generosity of those holy women, who presented to our Saint their voluntary offerings for his use, and who laid them upon that altar, where, in all probability, he officiated in the Divine service, and at which he poured forth this affecting prayer for the everlasting welfare of his people. In p. 21, he says—

“I have endeavoured to preserve myself for my Christian brethren, and for the Christian virgins, and for these holy women who gave me their voluntary offerings, and laid down their ornaments on the altar.”

“Therefore I pray (p. 23), that my Lord may never suffer me to lose these people, whom he has purchased from the extremities of the earth; and I pray him to grant me the grace of perseverance, and to make me his faithful witness to the hour of my death, which I will endure for my God; and if, by imitation, I have done any good for Him whom I love, I pray Him to give me the grace to shed my blood for these converts and captives of His.”

It may be proper here, and in the words of the Saint himself, to give some intimation of the end and object he proposed to himself in writing this Confession. In p. 5, he says—

“I formerly intended to write, and up to this day have hesitated, for I feared I would encounter the reproaches of men, for my sins have prevented me from experiencing what I had formerly read; whence this day I blush, and very much do dread to discover openly my ignorance, because I cannot explain, in conciseness of language, what my feelings dictate, and what my mind, and sense, and affections, demonstrate. And if some should seem to prefer me, with my ignorance and unpolished language, for it is written—‘The tongues of stammerers shall learn to speak plainly,’ how much more ought not we desire it, who are the Epistle of Christ to the extremity of the earth; not eloquent, but written in your hearts—not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; so that, with fear and reverence, and without reproach, I shall faithfully serve that people, whom the charity of Christ has transferred and bestowed upon me. I always give thanks to God, who gave me the grace to believe him faithful without measure, so that I, in these latter days, should dare to attempt this pious and wonderful work, and to imitate those whom our Lord had formerly foretold, should become the preachers of his Gospel for a testimony to all nations, before the consummation of the world; which, as we have seen it, so it came to pass.”

“For (p. 16,) I am a great debtor to God, who gave me so great a grace, that many people should be born unto the Lord through me, and be afterwards perfected, so that clergymen should every where receive ordination, to serve a people who lately embraced the faith—a people whom the Lord had called to himself from the extremities of the earth.”

“Therefore (p. 19,) in spite of the derision and insolence of all who choose, I will not hold my peace. Wherefore I ought unceasingly give thanks to God, who has so often indulged my foolishness and negligence.”

His spirit of mortification was worthy of a Christian Bishop. In p. 22, he says—

“For I know most certainly that poverty and calamity are far more suitable to me than riches and pleasures.”

In p. 16, he says—

“I heard them upbraid me as a stranger, and I suffered many persecutions, even unto chains; and yet I gave myself up without reserve for their advantage.”

His soul was so devoted to his holy and glorious purpose, that no attachment to any worldly object remained within him. In p. 15, he says—

“I obtained that wonderful and saving gift of God—to know him and to love him—so that I should renounce my country and my parents, and the generous offerings that were presented to me.”

In p. 13, he speaks of his mortifications, and the effects of them, saying—

“I was severely punished, and verily, I was humbled by hunger and nakedness, and daily proceeded, though not willingly, towards Ireland, until I nearly fainted away; but all this turned out well for me, because I was therefore amended by the Lord; and he so fitted me, that to-day I became what formerly I thought I never should have been.”

His detachment was so complete, that he exercised it, as he says, p. 14—

“Not only in prosperity but adversity; so that whatever may befall me, whether for good or evil, I shall endure it with equanimity, always giving thanks to God, who gave me the grace to believe him faithful without measure.”

We have the true spirit of detachment, not only from worldly goods and possessions, and all things temporal, but even from life itself; for he says, p. 16—

“And if I was held worthy, I am ready, immediately and cheerfully, to lay down my life for his name's sake; and I desire to sacrifice myself, even unto death, if the Lord should demand it.”

This present translation is made from that copy of “THE CONFESSION” which was published by the

Bollandists in the year 1654. There are three or four other different copies of this work published by the following writers, viz. :—One by Sir JAMES WARE, in the year 1656; another by Dr. CHARLES O'CONOR, in the year 1814; a third by Sir WILLIAM BETHAM, in the year 1826, and the last by Dr. JOACHIM LORENZO VILLANUEVA, in the year 1835. These several publications have been made from one or other of the five following very ancient MS., viz :—The first, more than one thousand years old, to be found in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, and to be seen among the MS. called “The Book of Armagh;” the second to be found in the Monastery of St. Vedast, at Noailles, near Beauvais, in France; the third in the Cottonian Library of the British Museum, London; and the two others in the Library of Salisbury, in Warwickshire, England.

The authenticity and genuineness of these manuscripts have been at all times admitted and universally acknowledged—and first, by all the ancient authors of the Life of St. Patrick, who frequently cite this “Confession” as his genuine work; secondly, by the more modern writers, viz.—BOLLANDUS, WARE, USHER, COLGAN, TILLEMONT, MABILLON, MARTENE, O'CONOR, BUTLER, and LANIGAN.

It only now remains to say one word or two of the language in which this book was written. It was written by ST. PATRICK, originally in the Latin language. ST. AUGUSTINE died thirty-five years before ST. PATRICK; and it was in this Latin lan-

guage that he wrote *his* Confessions. This language was acquired by ST. PATRICK in the prosecution of those studies necessary for the discharge of the functions of his sacred ministry. These studies were made by him at Tours, in Lerins, and at Auxerre, under ST. GERMAIN. This language was then, as now, very generally known amongst the learned and amongst churchmen. It was in this language that Sulpitius Severus, a schoolfellow of ST. PATRICK, at Marmoutier, near Tours, wrote the Life of ST. MARTIN, Bishop of Tours. It was in this same language that ST. VINCENT of Lerins wrote his *Comminitorium*, about thirty years before the death of ST. PATRICK. About this time, also, the whole volume of the Sacred Scriptures was translated into Latin by ST. JEROME, after having been previously circulated throughout the whole Latin Church in an ancient Latin version, which was called the "*Vetus Itala*."

Before I conclude these few words of dedication, allow me once more to recommend this work to your frequent and practical perusal.

Give constant glory and thanks to God for the priceless gift of Faith, which God has so bountifully bestowed upon you, by the devoted ministry of St. Patrick. Above all things be careful to guard and preserve this precious treasure, and to do the works of Faith. For, not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. (a)

(a) Rom. ii. 13 ; James, i. 22.

Be careful also to transmit, inviolably and entirely, this divine deposit, to your children, and to your remotest posterity; like your generous forefathers, who have clung, at all times, and in all circumstances, with undying tenacity, to the doctrines and the practices of faith.

In fine, take the heavenly counsel of St. Paul, and as he advises you—"obey your Prelates, and be subject to them, for they watch as being to render an account of your souls." (*a*)

May the God of Peace who brought again from the dead the Great Pastor of the Sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the blood of the everlasting Testament, make you perfect in every good work, that you may do His will, working in you, that which is well and pleasing in his sight. (*b*)

Now to Him who is able to preserve you without sin, and to present you spotless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and magnificence, dominion and power, before all ages, both now and for ever and ever.—Amen. (*c*)

With feelings of deep sympathy in all your sufferings, and with best wishes and heartiest prayers for your every welfare, I remain your faithful and devoted servant in Christ,

THE PARISH PRIEST OF ST. MICHAN'S.

(*a*) Heb. xiii. 17.

(*b*) Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

(*c*) Jude, i. 24, 25.

S U M M A R Y
OF THE
LIFE OF ST. PATRICK.

ST. PATRICK was born at Bononia (now Boulogne) in one of the Roman Provinces of Armoric Gaul. His parents were Christians, and his family belonged to that respectable class of citizens, who were entitled to hold municipal offices. His father's name was Calphurnius; he was a Decurion, and had been formerly a Deacon; I say formerly, because the law of ecclesiastical celibacy being then, as now, in force, his acceptance of holy orders, was in conformity with this law. The Saint was born in the year of our Lord 387, and was made captive when he was 16 years of age, by an Irish Prince, called Nial, of the Nine Hostages. This prince conveyed St. Patrick to Ireland, where he was sold as a slave to one Milcho, who employed him in the tending of his sheep. In this humble pastoral occupation, he had abundant opportunity of entering into himself; and as in this desolate condition, he had no other friends to recur to, he made a friend of God. During the six long years which he passed among strangers, and in Ireland, a foreign country, he acquired, almost without perceiving it, a knowledge of the idolatry, the language and the habits of the people; all this, as he says himself, "was the work of God," for hereby,

as he himself also testifies—"The Lord made him "fit for the great work which he had marked out for "him."

The lonely hours of his enslavement, he tells us, "were spent in fasting, and in prayer, and in deploring the wretched condition of that people amongst "whom his lot was cast." At length his divine expedition, was revealed to him by God, and the Lord made known to him the approach of the end of his captivity. In a vision He once intimated to him—"Well dost thou fast, and soon shalt thou "return to thy country."

At this period he was in Ireland, far away from his friends, and from his native Gaul, where he was born. At the end of six years, he was made free, and restored to his family and friends.

Some short time afterwards he was again made captive, but this enslavement lasted only for a few months. On this occasion he returned again to his country and his parents, who received him as their child, and earnestly besought him, after all the sufferings he had endured, never more to separate himself from them. But here again, his heavenly calling to the Irish people, was made manifest to him, and he saw one night in a vision, a man coming to him as if from Ireland, with a great number of letters, and one of them ran thus—"The voice of the Irish," and he imagined, at that moment, that he heard the voices of many, who cried out as if with one accord, "Oh! holy youth, we entreat you to come and still "to walk amongst us."

All these heavenly inspirations produced their desired effect; and at length, after repeated warnings, he seriously resolves to devote himself to the sacred ministry, and to all the duties of the ecclesiastical state of life. For this purpose, he determines

to enter the college or seminary of Marmoutier, near Tours, in France. This was the celebrated Monastery of St. Martin of Tours. Here he remained, with attention to his sacred studies, for the next four years of his holy life, which brings us to the period of the year of our Lord 418. About this period, by the advice of St. Germain, of Auxerre, he repairs to the Monastery of Lerins, for his greater proficiency and perfection in his sacred studies. After his return in the year 429, he accompanies St. Germain and St. Lupus, to England, for the extirpation of the Pelagian heresy, which was encroaching there. St. Germain, on account of his zeal and conduct, was sent into Britain by Pope Celestine, in quality of his Vicar, to prevent the threatening danger of this heresy.

During their mission to England, they could easily obtain information, concerning the progress of Christianity in Ireland. And, there is no doubt, that they were encouraged and assisted in their inquiries, by St. Patrick, who accompanied them in their spiritual expedition, and who had been long intimate with St. Germain, whom Pope Celestine had deputed his Legate on this occasion, as Dr. Lanigan observes in his History, vol. I. p. 34. This intimacy between St. Germain and St. Patrick is thus detailed by Heiric, a monk of Auxerre, who flourished in the year 876, and who was the biographer of the Bishop St. Germain. In his life of St. Germain he thus speaks of St. Patrick, nearly a thousand years ago—

“Patrick, as the course of his achievements sets forth, being the especial Apostle of Ireland, passing eighteen years under the most holy tutorship of St. Germain, drank in no small learning, concerning the heavenly Scriptures, from the spring of such a fountain. The holy bishop saw him, magnanimous in religion, excelling in virtues, strenuous in doctrine,

and thinking it unfit, that a very strong husbandman should be listless in the culture of the harvest of the Lord, he sent him to Holy Celestine the Pope of the City of Rome, with his priest Segetius, who might bear testimony of ecclesiastical probity, in behalf of this most illustrious man, at the Apostolic See ; by the judgment of which being approved, and leaning on its authority, and strengthened by its blessing, he sought Ireland, and being given to that people as their chosen Apostle, he illustrated Ireland, then, as he does now, and will do so for ever, with the wonderful privilege of his Apostleship."

Sigebert in his chronicle, at the year 432, speaks thus—"Celestine sends Palladius to the Scots believing in Christ, after whom the same Celestine sends St. Patrick to the same Scots."

Marianus Scotus, at the year 432, says "Palladius was ordained by Pope Celestine and sent the first bishop to the Scots, after him St. Patrick was sent by the same Celestine as Archbishop to Ireland."*

Besides the authorities already mentioned, we have those of our own country, viz. :—The Annals of Innisfallen, the Annals of Boyle, and the Annals of the Four Masters. So much so, that there can be no doubt of the mission of St. Patrick by Pope Celestine.

It is, however, to be observed, that there always has prevailed, and still prevails, a constant tradition in Boulogne, not only that St. Patrick was born in this district, but that he officiated for a long time there. This circumstance leads us to the feeling, that God, by this means, had fitted our Apostle for the great work to which he appointed him. What could be more suitable than the missions of Britain and Gaul, for the mission in Ireland?

* Marianus died in 1086, and Sigebert in 1112.

At this time, in the year of our Lord 432, St. Patrick set out for Ireland, very much against the wish of his parents and friends, who, in the narrow spirit of this world, represented to him all the dangers he would have to undergo, and the little chances of success he was likely to meet, amongst a barbarous and unchristian people. But nothing could deter our Saint from his fixed and holy purpose. He arrives in Ireland, and lands in the harbour near Dublin. Subsequently, meeting with some opposition, he sets sail for the north of Ireland, and for the place that had been hallowed by his former captivity. He meets here, some of his old friends, and as soon as he had preached to them, he converted them. On hearing that the King, and his officers of state, were about to assemble at the triennial Convocation of Tara, he determines to proceed thither, and open this, his solemn mission before the assembled states of the people. This was the Easter or Paschal time, so that there were added to these functions of civic solemnity, the usual annual holy rites of religion. One of these rites was the lighting of the Paschal fire, which St. Patrick enkindled, for the solemn celebration of Easter. The Pagan superstition of fire worship then prevailed, and the King and his courtiers who were attended and surrounded by the Druids, were about to commence the solemn rites of their superstition.

At this period there existed a law, that no fire should be lighted for a considerable distance all around, until the fire of the King, was enkindled in the Royal Palace of Tara. St. Patrick's fire having been lighted first, and having been seen distinctly from the heights of Tara, considerable surprise and indignation were excited. The King, upon inquiring who could have dared to infringe the law, was answered by the Magi, that this forbidden fire should be extinguished ; and

upon hearing it was St. Patrick, he was immediately ordered into the royal presence. None of the kingly followers were allowed to salute him, or shew him the least mark of respect. But Herc, the son of Dego, disobeyed the injunction, and rose up to salute the Saint. Whereupon, after receiving his blessing, he became a believer, and was afterwards celebrated for his sanctity as the first Bishop of Slane. Dubtach and Fiech, were among these early converts. Fiech was afterwards the Bishop of Sletty, and author of the Hymn in honor of St. Patrick.

Nothing can be more sublime and grand than the dignified and solemn entrance of St. Patrick, into the King's presence, at the Palace of Tara. Preceded by the Crucifix, and accompanied by his Clergy, the holy man advances like a prophet, into the royal assembly, chaunting as he went along, and as he ascended the hill of Tara, that divine hymn of Faith which he himself composed for the occasion, and which, by the providence of God, remains extant to this day, in the very Irish language in which he had sung it, and of which the following is a translation :—

HYMN OF ST. PATRICK.

There has come to me, to-day, powerful strength, the invocation of the Trinity.

I invoke the mighty power of the Trinity, I believe in the Trinity under the unity of the God of the Elements.

At Tara, to-day, I place between me and harm, the virtue of the birth of Christ with His Baptism ; the virtue of His Crucifixion with His Burial ; the virtue of His Resurrection, with His Ascension ; the virtue of the coming to the Eternal Judgment.

At Tara, to-day, the virtue of the love of the Seraphim, the obedience of the angels, the hope of the resurrection to eternal reward, the prayers of the noble fathers, the predictions of the prophets, the preaching of the Apostles, the faith of the confessors, the purity of the holy Virgin, the deeds of just men.

At Tara, to day, the strength of heaven, the light of the sun, the whiteness of the snow, the face of fire, the rapidity of lightning, the swiftness of the wind, the depth of the sea, the stability of the earth. the hardness of rocks.

At Tara, to-day, may the strength of God pilot me! may the power of God preserve me! may the wisdom of God instruct me! may the Eye of God behold me! may the Ear of God hear me! may the Word of God make me eloquent! may the Hand of God protect me! may the Way of God direct me! may the Shield of God defend me! may the Heart of God guard me against the snares of demons, the temptations of vices, the inclinations of the mind, against every man who meditates evil towards me, far or nigh, alone or with others!

I place all these powers between me and every evil, unmerciful powers directed against my soul and my body, as a protection against the incantations of false prophets, against the black laws of Gentilism, against the false laws of heresy, against the treachery of idolatry, against the spells of witches and Druids, against every knowledge which blinds the soul of man. May Christ protect me this day against poison, against burning, against drowning, against wounding, until I merit a great reward.

Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ after me, Christ in me, Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ at my right hand, Christ on my left, Christ at this side, Christ at that side, Christ at my back. May Christ be in the heart of each person to whom I may speak, Christ in the mouth of each person who speaks to me, Christ in each eye which sees me, Christ in each ear which hears me.

The King, unfortunately for himself, on this occasion and ever after, continued an unconverted Heathen and resisted the heavenly grace, which was most benignly presented to him in the soothing and inspiring accents of St. Patrick.

About the year 435, after having visited a considerable portion of the district of Meath, St. Patrick sets out for the Province of Connaught. On this occasion, having accidentally met the two daughters of King Leogaire, and having been questioned by them, as to the nature of the true God, he took

occasion to instruct them, and ended by converting and baptizing them. Subsequently, they consecrated themselves entirely to God, and became holy Virgins of Christ. In this province was situated the celebrated Mount Eagle, upon which holy mountain, St. Patrick spent very many of his days and nights, in fasting and prayer.

The progress of religion in this district was very great, and we read on several occasions of his having baptized many thousand persons. In these several localities, as was his invariable custom throughout every part of his mission, he placed holy Bishops, to take charge of the several churches he had constantly established.

Previously to his leaving Meath, he attended the celebration of the public games, and took occasion, by reason of the vast multitudes who were assembled here, to advance progressively the glorious work of his mission. For him was reserved the great glory of the destruction of the Monster Idol, called "Cromcrurch," which was famous in the annals of the Druidical superstition. Fortunately for us, both idol and worship were destroyed. Upon the very spot, to the great glory of religion, a large Church was erected to perpetuate this memorable triumph.

Although it has been frequently asserted, that not one drop of human blood was shed, during the peaceful progress of St. Patrick's career, nevertheless, we cannot forbear to mention, the cheerful sacrifice which was made in the cause of religion and St. Patrick, by his faithful charioteer, the devoted St. Odranus. St. Patrick takes occasion to mention, in his Confession, the many dangers, even of his life, to which, in the course of his ministry, he had been exposed. On one occasion, and on this only, an unconverted Pagan Chieftain, hired an assassin to take

away the life of the Saint. This murderer was employed to do his bloody work, by plunging a poignard into the heart of the Saint. It was so arranged, that, he should kill on the way, the man, who in travelling, sat next to the driver. Now all this was known to the coachman, Odranus, who feigning indisposition, prayed St. Patrick to take the driver's seat, and to allow him to place himself, as it were, beside the driver. The assassin having had his instructions, to kill the man who sat in this place, not personally knowing either of the travellers, mistook Odranus for St. Patrick, and immediately slew him. By this self-sacrificing act, the palm of martyrdom has been awarded to St. Odranus, whose festival consequently occurs in the Martyrology on the 14th September.

St. Patrick in his Confession (chapter v.) had already alluded to the generous friends, whom he had provided to accompany him in the course of his mission. Three holy Bishops named Secundinus, Auxilius and Isserninus, were amongst his primitive followers. Secundinus was the first Bishop of Dunshaughlin, and author of a very popular Hymn in praise of St. Patrick. Auxilius was the first Bishop of Killossy, and was present with Isserninus, at one of the Synods which were celebrated during his mission, by St. Patrick. Isserninus was the first Bishop of Kilcullen, and he assisted St. Patrick with Auxilius, in that celebrated Synod, which gives us their Decrees and Canons for the government of the Irish Clergy. St. Secundinus (being dead) could not have attended at this holy Synod. He was the first Bishop who died in Ireland about the year 448.

At this period, occurred, the wanton and barbarous outrage of a neighbouring prince, whose name was Corotic. St. Patrick having baptized, was actually

after having administered the Sacrament of Confirmation, to a considerable number of his newly converted Christians. They were all extended in rank and order before him on the plain, when this savage tyrant rushed upon them from the adjoining coast, and brutally murdered several of those holy innocents, and made captives of the remainder, carrying along with him, the little property they had possessed. St. Patrick justly indignant at this sacrilegious conduct, most loudly remonstrates against this royal offender, and boldly demands back the Christians whom he had captured, and the spoils which he had plundered. On this occasion, the meek and humble Apostle, was obliged to exercise the plenitude of his episcopal power, by pronouncing against the King and his associates, the awful sentence of excommunication of the church. The history of this transaction and of this censure are fortunately both still extant, in that important letter, which the Saint then wrote with his own hand, and caused to be delivered immediately to the King by one of his own attendant clergy.

St. Patrick having now visited, and evangelized three of the provinces of the kingdom, determines to repair to the royal residence of the Kings of Munster. Here he was received by the young King Aengus, with the utmost piety and veneration. An occurrence is said here to have taken place, at the baptism of the young prince. St. Patrick accidentally pierced the young neophyte's foot with the pointed end of his crozier, which was thus shaped, for the convenience of standing erect when driven into the ground. The heroic prince, supposing this to be a part of the ceremony, endured it for a while with magnanimity, till it had been seen and removed by the Saint.

Several other persons of distinction, as well as a great multitude of the people, were converted during this visit.

According to his custom, the Saint places in charge of this Church, his own disciple and fellow-labourer, St. Ailbe of Emly, whom his contemporaries have dignified with the appellation of the second Patrick.

Having thus traversed the whole Island, and being resolved to consolidate the glorious work, which God through his ministry, had enabled him to effect, he now thinks seriously of establishing his own Metropolitan See, in the Royal City of Armagh. Here after having celebrated several Diocesan Synods for the preservation and maintenance of the holy Faith which he had preached, and after having established several schools and seminaries, for the moral and literary instruction of his people, he ascends a neighbouring lofty mountain, from which he could command a view of the entire surrounding country, and lifting up his holy hands, he prays and imparts his solemn Benediction to the whole converted Island, which then spread out its entire surface before him, and he uses these remarkable words which are found towards the latter end of his Confession—

“Therefore, I pray that my Lord will never suffer me to lose these people whom he has purchased from the extremities of the earth, and I pray, that he will vouchsafe to make me his faithful witness until the hour of my death, which I will endure for my God.”

We will not here attempt to point out the number of Bishops whom he consecrated, of Clergy whom he ordained, of Churches which he built and founded, of Convents and Nunneries which he established, and of Schools which he instituted, during the long period of thirty-three years, which his holy mission in Ireland has been allowed to exist. All these, and various other interesting de-

tails, will be found enumerated in the several histories of his multiplied biographers.

Suffice it in a word to say, and that word shall be one of his own inspired words, which commands us "most certainly to believe that all is the work of God."

The hour of his holy death is now at hand. He retires for this purpose to his favorite Monastery of Saul, and there was attended by Bishop Tassach, who fervently administered to the Saint, the Holy Viaticum, and usual rites of religion.

With sentiments of the most perfect resignation, and with the most complete abandonment of his whole self to God, giving him glory for the past, and commending to Him all concerns for the future, he breathes forth his pious soul into the hands of Him who created him, uttering in spirit these dying words of his loving Lord and Master :

"Father, I have glorified thee upon this earth—I have manifested thy name to men—I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do."(*a*)

The news of his death spread like lightning through the country. The priests and the people celebrated his funeral obsequies with universal mourning. The holy Sacrifice of propitiation was every where offered up for his enjoyment and increase of heavenly beatitude. The darkness of the night was expelled, and the blaze of the funeral torches made it resemble the light even of day.

His venerable remains were consigned to that tomb in Down where repose the precious relics of his two other sanctified cotemporaries, St. Columbkil and St. Bridget.

(*a*) John, xvii. 4, 5, 6.

THE
CONFESSION
OF
SAINT PATRICK.

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CHAPTER I.

Of his Family and captivity, and of this Confession—In his captivity he confesses the Divinity of God, and Faith—He considers how to write this true Confession of himself, (although with some misgivings, on account of his unpolished language,) lest he should be ungrateful to God, by whom he has been so very much exalted.

“I, PATRICK, a most unlearned sinner, the least of all the Faithful, and the most contemptible amongst many, have had for my father, Calphurnius, a Deacon, who was the son of Potitus, formerly a Priest, from the town of Benaven Taberniæ, near the village of Enon, where I was made captive. I was then about 16 years of age, being ignorant of the true God, I was brought captive into Ireland, with so many thousand men, according as we had deserved; because we had withdrawn from God—did not keep his commandments—and were disobedient to our

Priests, who advised us for our salvation. The Lord therefore, poured out upon us the wrath of his indignation, and scattered us amongst the Gentiles, even to the uttermost bounds of the earth ; where now my unworthiness seems to abide amongst strangers, and where the Lord hath opened the ears of my incredulous heart, that even latterly, I might remember my sins, and be converted with my whole heart to my Lord, who hath regarded my lowliness, and had compassion on the ignorance of my youth, and preserved me, before I knew him, or could distinguish good from evil ; admonishing and consoling me, as a father does his child. Whence, indeed, I cannot, nor should I conceal, such benefits, and so much grace, which the Lord hath vouchsafed to bestow upon me, in the land of my captivity. For this is our recompense, that after the chastisement and the acknowledgment of God, we confess his wonders before every nation under Heaven. For there neither is, nor was, nor will be, before, or since, any other God, except our unbegotten God, the Father, without beginning, from whom is all beginning. For by him, all things visible, and invisible, were made. By him was begotten his consubstantial Son, who was made man, and who having conquered Death, was assumed by his Father into Heaven. He gave him all power over every name^(a), of those that are in Heaven, on Earth, and in Hell, that every tongue might confess that the Lord Jesus Christ, is in the glory of God the Father, whom we believe, and expect to come, as the future judge of the living and the dead. Who will render to every one according to his works, and pour out abundantly upon us the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the pledge of Immortality. Making

(a) Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11.

those who believe and obey him, to become the Sons of God the Father, whom we confess and adore, as one God, in the Trinity of his Holy Name. For he spoke by the Prophets(*a*)—"Thou shalt call upon me in the day of tribulation, and I will deliver thee, and thou wilt glorify me." And again he says—"It is most glorious to confess and reveal the works of the Lord."(*b*) However, though I am imperfect in many things, I am anxious that my brethren and kinsfolk should be made acquainted with my circumstances, and that they should understand the aspirings of my soul. For I am well aware of the testimony of my Lord, who thus speaks by the Psalmist(*c*)—"Thou shalt destroy all those who speak a lie." And again, "The mouth that telleth lies, killeth the soul."(*d*) And the same Lord, in the Gospel saith (*e*)—"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account of it in the day of judgment." Wherefore, most earnestly, with fear and trembling, I ought to dread this sentence; on that day, when nobody can conceal or hide himself, but all must, without exception, render an account of our most trivial sins, before the Tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, I formerly intended to write, and up to this day, I have hesitated, for I feared I would encounter the reproaches of men. Not being educated as others, who were very learned in the sacred Scriptures, and who have never changed their studious condition from their infancy, but have been always adding, more and more to their advancement. Besides, our words have had to be translated into a different language. Now, one can easily ascertain, from the

(*a*) Ps. lxxx. 8(*b*) Tob. xii. 7.(*c*) Ps. v. 7.(*d*) Wisd. i. 11.(*e*) Matt. xii. 36.

context of my writing, how I have been brought up and instructed in my conversations. For the wise man says(*a*), "By the tongue we discover the sense, and the knowledge, and the doctrine of truth. But defence is profitable if true, especially when one has any thing to presume upon. So that now I desire, in my old age, what I have not attained in my youth; for my sins have prevented me from experiencing what I had formerly read; but who will believe me, and if I say, what I have said before, that I was made captive, whilst a youth, nay, almost a beardless boy, before I could understand what I ought to desire or to avoid. Whence this day I blush and very much do dread to discover openly my ignorance, because I cannot explain with conciseness of language what my feelings dictate, and my mind, and sense and affections demonstrate, and if it be given to me, as to others, I will not be silent for recompense; and if some should seem to prefer me with mine ignorance and unpolished language, for it is written(*b*)—"The tongues of stammerers shall learn to speak plainly." How much more ought not we desire it, who are the epistle of Christ, to the extremity of the earth, not eloquent(*c*), but written in your hearts, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God.(*d*) Simplicity is the creation of the Most High, as the spirit of the same living God testifies. Wherefore, I, at first, simple and unlearned, not knowing how to provide for the future, but this I know, without doubt, that before I was humbled, I was like a stone that lieth in the depth of the mire, until he who is Almighty came, and in his mercy lifted me up and raised me on high, and placed me on the sum-

(*a*) Eccus. iv. 29.

(*b*) Is. xxxii. 4.

(*c*) 2 Cor. iii. 3.

(*d*) Eccus. vii. 16.

mit of the wall. Hence, I ought to cry out more and more in gratitude to the Lord for such benefits, (now and for ever,) which the human mind can make no account of. Wherefore, admire and praise ye, great and small, who fear the Lord; and you who know not the Lord. Ye learned ones hear and examine who hath raised me, a fool, from the midst of those who seemed to be wise and lawyer-like, and eloquent in language and every other accomplishment and indeed who inspired me, who am hateful in this world above all others, to become his servant, so that with fear and reverence, and without reproach, I shall faithfully serve that people, whom the charity of Christ transferred and bestowed upon me, during my life, if I prove worthy. Finally, that in all humility and truth, I should serve him without end or measure.

CHAPTER II.

Patrick escaping from slavery by flight, returns to his countrymen, to whom he writes this letter.—In his slavery he was very much given to prayer—He is admonished of his freedom—Relying on God, he makes his escape, and is received gratuitously by the sailors into their ship—Afterwards, by prayer, he obtains sustenance for them during the famine in the desert—He is delivered from the temptations of the devil by the intercession of Elias.

“Wherefore, we must now distinguish what belongs to Faith, in the Trinity, and without fear of danger, we must make known the gift of God, and his everlasting consolation spreading every where, without apprehension and with confidence, the know-

ledge of God's holy name, and even, after my death, bequeathing to my brethren and to my children whom I have baptized in the Lord, consisting of so many thousand men, although I was unworthy, nor such as the Lord would grant this favor to his servant, who, after so many changes of such magnitude—after captivity, and after so many years spent amongst that people, would bestow so great a favor, that I, in my youth, neither hoped for nor imagined. But as soon as I came to Ireland, I was daily tending the flocks, and frequently praying, every day, that the love of God might be more enkindled in my heart ; that fear, and faith, and energy, would be increased ; so much so, that in one day I poured out my prayers a hundred times, and as often in the night—nay, even in woods and mountains I remained, and rose before the light to my prayer, in frost, and snow, and rain, and suffered no inconvenience, nor yielded to any slothfulness such as I now experience, because the spirit of the Lord was fervent within me. Being there in a dream one night, I heard a voice saying to me, “ Well dost thou fast, and soon shalt thou return to thy country.” Again, after a little time, I heard an answer given to me, intimating that the ship was ready ; and it was not near, but was distant about two hundred miles. Now I never had been in that place, nor had any knowledge of the inhabitants thereof.

“ After this, I took flight, and met the man with whom I had been for six years, and in the power of God, he directed my course until I came to Benan, and I feared nothing until I came up to the ship ; and when I came there, it had gone from its place, and I asked for the means to set sail. The captain, however, was displeased, and answered with bitter indignation : “ Do not you dare to ask to come with

us ;” which, when I heard, I separated myself from them, to come to the hut where I lived, and on the journey I began to pray. Before I finished my prayer, I heard one of the sailors crying loudly after me : “ Make haste, for these men are calling you ;” and immediately I returned to them, and they began to say to me : “ Come, for we have found thee faithful, and wish to enter into friendship with thee as far as you are willing.” Upon that day I entered their ship. On account of God, nevertheless, I had no hopes that they would say to me : “ Come to us in the faith of Christ,” because they were Gentiles. Now all this I obtained from them, and immediately we set sail. After three days we made the land, and for twenty-seven days we journeyed through a desert. Both meat and drink failed us. The famine was increasing upon us, and one day the captain said to me : “ What is the matter with you, O Christian ? You say your God is great and powerful ; why don’t you, therefore, pray to him for us ? Pray for us, for we are perishing with hunger, and scarcely shall we see mortal man any more.” But I confidently said to them : “ Be converted to the Lord my God with your whole heart, for there is nothing impossible to him, who will send us meat this day on our journey until we are comforted, for abundance belongs to him.” By the assistance of God, therefore, it so fell out ; for behold, a herd of swine came before us on the road, and they killed some of them, and they remained there two nights with abundance of refreshment ; and their dogs were surfeited, and many of them left half dead upon the road. Now, after all this, they gave great thanks to God, and I became very estimable in their sight. From that time they had abundance of meat ; nay, they found even wild honey, which one of them

offering to me, said, "This has been immolated to God, give thanks." But I tasted none of it.(a) On the same night, whilst I was asleep, Satan violently tempted me, which I shall remember as long as I am in this body : for there fell upon me, as it were, a huge piece of rock, which took away the strength of all my limbs, but I know not whence it came, and in spirit I called on Elias ; and in the mean time I saw the sun arise, and whilst I was crying out "Elias" with all my strength, behold the splendour of that luminary immediately dispersed all uneasiness from me ; and I believe that Christ assisted me, and his holy spirit cried out for me ; and I have confidence that the same will happen to me in the day of my tribulation, as the Lord doth testify in the Gospel : "In that day," saith he,(b) "it is not you who will speak, but the spirit of your Father will speak within you." On our journey, he provided us with food and fire, and dry weather daily, until we met with human beings on the fourteenth day, as I have related above. For twenty-eight days we travelled through the desert, and that very night on which we went forward, we were all of us without food.

(a) 1 Cor. x. 28, 29.

(b) Matt. x 20.

CHAPTER III.

The calling of Patrick into Ireland—Several contradictions—

After a second captivity, by means of an inward voice, in a Vision at night, he is invited into Ireland—He triumphs over all the temptations, anxieties, contradictions, and injuries, that were presented before him—He pardons those who were the cause of them, and gives thanks to God, who made himself manifest to him.

“After a few years, I was again made captive by the Gentiles, and remained with them only for one night. I received an answer from God, intimating to me, “For the space of two months you shall abide with them,” and so it came to pass; for on the sixtieth night, the Lord delivered me out of their hands. After a few years, I came into Britain again, to visit my parents, who received me as their child, and earnestly besought me, after all the sufferings I had endured, no longer to separate myself from them. There I saw by night, in a vision, a man coming to me as if from Ireland, whose name was Victri-
cius, and who brought a great number of letters, and gave one of them to me. The commencement of the letter, as I read it, runs thus—“The voice of the Irish;” and whilst I was reading the commencement of the letter, I imagined at the moment that I heard the voices of many, who were near the wood Focluti, which is beside the Western Ocean. After this manner they cried out, as if with one voice: “Oh! holy youth, we entreat you to come, and still to walk amongst us.” And I was exceedingly afflicted in my heart, and could read no more, but quickly awoke. Thanks be to God, that, after many years, the Lord has vouchsafed to hear their earnest cry.

And on another night—God knows, for I know not—I heard within me, or beside me, some persons singing in the spirit the most beautiful words, and I knew not who they were, nor could I understand what I heard, until, at the end of their prayer, they thus spoke :(*a*) “He who gave his life for you.” And again I awoke, and again I heard one praying within me, and it was within my inward man, and prayed fervently, with groaning. In the mean time I was stupified, and wondered and considered who this could be who was praying within me. But at the end of his prayer he said he was a spirit; and I remembered the word of the Apostle, saying, (*b*) “The spirit helpeth the weakness of our prayer. For what we ought to pray for, we know not, but the spirit himself asketh for us,” with unspeakable groanings, which I cannot express in words. And again, “The Lord is our advocate, and he asks for us.” And when I was tempted by some of my elders, who came to me on account of my sins, to urge me against my laborious episcopacy; and I was violently tempted on that day, so that I might have fallen then, and for ever. But the Lord had mercy on his stranger convert for his name’s sake, and favorably came to my aid in this tribulation, so that I escaped from the same without blame, and without reproach. I beseech the Lord, that he lay not the occasion of this sin to their charge; for after the space of thirty years, they discovered against me that word, which I confessed before I was ordained deacon, on account of the anxiety of my sorrowing mind, I confessed to my dearest friend what I had done one day in my boyhood, nay, in one hour—for as yet I had no understanding—I know not, God knows it, if I was

(*a*) Ecclus. xxix. 19.

(*b*) Rom. viii. 26.

then fifteen years of age, though I did not believe in one God from my infancy ; but remained in death and unbelief ; until I was severely punished ; and, verily, I was humbled by hunger and nakedness, and daily proceeded, though not willingly, towards Ireland, until I nearly fainted away. But all this turned out well for me,^(a) because I was hereby amended by the Lord ; and He so fitted me, that to-day I became what formerly I thought I never should be, so that I had a concern and a zeal for the salvation of others, when I had none for my own. Wherefore, upon the day in which I was reproved by my above-mentioned censors, I saw that night, in a vision, before my face, a writing that was without honor, and in the mean time I heard an answer from the Lord, saying to me : “ We have imperfectly seen the face of him who was marked out to us, and whose name was discovered.” Nor did he say, “ You have imperfectly seen,” but, “ We have imperfectly seen,” as if he there joined himself to another ; like when he said,^(b) “ He who touches you, touches the apple of my eye.” Wherefore I give thanks to him who has comforted me in all things, so as not to interfere with the journey I had resolved upon, nor with my purpose ; which I had learned from my Lord, but rather I felt within me an uncommon strength, and my faith was approved before God and men ; whence I boldly assert, that my conscience offers me no reproach. I have God for my witness that I have spoken the truth in those things I related ; but I grieved the more for my friend, to whom I trusted my soul, that we should have deserved to hear such an answer ; and I found out from some of my brethren, before such prohibition, that I was not there, nor was I in Britain,

(a) Rom. viii. 28.

(b) 6 Zach. ii. 8.

nor was I the occasion that he, in my absence, should have defended me ; for he said with his own lips, " You are to be raised to the dignity of the episcopacy, of which I was not worthy." But how came it afterwards, that in the presence of all, both good and bad, he should publicly accuse me of that which formerly and freely he had joyfully indulged me with ?

" But the Lord is greater than all. I say enough ; but, however, I ought not to conceal the gift of God, which he bestowed on me in the land of my captivity, because at that time I earnestly sought him, and found him, and he preserved me from all my iniquities, because of his spirit that dwelleth in me^(a), who has worked within me even to the present day ; for the Lord well knew that if I heard these things from man, I would, perhaps, have concealed them, on account of the charity of Christ. Therefore, I give unceasing thanks to my God, who preserved me faithful in the day of temptation ; so that daily, with confidence, I offer sacrifice to him, and consecrate my soul a living victim to my Lord, who preserved me in all my trials ; so that I can say to him, " Who am I, O Lord, or what is my dessert, that you should have showered such graces on me ? This day will I extol and magnify thy name wherever I may be, and this not only in prosperity, but adversity, so that whatever may befall me, whether good or evil, I shall endure it with equanimity, always giving thanks to God, who gave me the grace to believe him faithful without measure ; so that I, in these latter days, should now dare to attempt this pious and wonderful work, and to imitate those whom our Lord had formerly foretold, would become the preachers of his Gospel, for a testimony to all nations, before the con-

(a) Rom. viii 11.

summation of the world; which, as we have seen it, so it came to pass; for behold we are witnesses to the preaching of his Gospel in those places where no one farther off existed.

CHAPTER IV.

Fruits of the Apostleship of Patrick—He praises God, who preserved him from Sin, and furnished him with the grace of Preaching, and with a zeal for propagating his Gospel, and bringing Nations into the Church, according to the precept of our Lord, and the testimony of the Prophets, and this with so much fruit, that many holy Men and Women should vie with each other in their ardor for evangelical perfection—He maintains he cannot, on any account, relinquish the good work he had begun, although he acknowledges his own imperfections.

“It would be a tedious matter to give a narrative, wholly or in part, of all my labors. Briefly let me say how the God of piety often rescued me from slavery, and from the many dangers wherein my soul was perilled, besides many snares, which I cannot express in words, lest I should fatigue my readers. But I have God for my author, who knows all things before they happen, and who often admonished me, a poor wretched creature, by his divine revelations. Where have I acquired that wisdom, which was not in me, who knew not even God, nor the number of my days? Again, whence have I obtained that wonderful and saving gift of God, to know him, and to love him, so that I should renounce my country and my parents, and the several offerings which were presented to me with weeping and

with tears? And there I went against the wishes of many of my elders; but, by the grace of God, I by no means consented nor acquiesced in their desires. I resisted them all—not I, but the grace of God, which triumphed in me, until I came to the Irish nation to preach the Gospel, and endure reproaches from unbelievers. I heard them upbraid me as a stranger, and I suffered many persecutions, even unto chains; and yet I gave myself up without reserve for their advantage. And if I were held worthy, I am ready, immediately and cheerfully, to lay down my life for his name's sake, and I desire to sacrifice myself, even unto death, if the Lord should demand it; for I am a great debtor to God, who gave me so great a grace, that many people should be born unto the Lord through me, and be afterwards perfected, so that clergymen should every where receive ordination to serve a people that lately embraced the faith—a people whom the Lord had called to himself from the extremities of the earth, and to say, “Our fathers adored false gods, and there is no benefit from them.” And again, “I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest become my salvation even to the boundaries of the earth.” And there I will expect his promise, who never deceives, as in the Gospel he has pledged himself(*a*)—“They will come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” as we believe. They will come from every part of the world, wherefore we must fish diligently and carefully, as the Lord recommended, saying(*b*), “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” And again, by the Prophet(*c*), “Behold I

(*a*) Matt. viii. 11.

(*b*) Matt. iv. 19.

(*c*) Jer. xvi. 16.

send you many fishers and hunters, saith the Lord." Hence we must cast our nets, so that a large and copious multitude be taken for God; so that everywhere there would be clergymen who would baptize so great and so zealous a people, as the Lord admonishes and teaches(*a*)—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." And again, he says(*b*), "Go ye to the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized will be saved." "And preach this Gospel of the kingdom in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations, and then the consummation shall come." And again the Lord, foretelling by his Prophet(*c*), says, "And it shall come to pass in these latter days, saith the Lord I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams. And indeed, upon my servants and handmaids, in those days, I will pour out my spirit, and they shall prophesy." And Osee says(*d*), "I will call those my people who are not my people, and those who have not obtained mercy, as those who have. And in the place where it is said, you are not my people, there shall they be called the sons of the living God." And now, with regard to the Irish, who had no knowledge of God, and who never worshipped any other but unclean idols, behold how they have lately become the people of the Lord, and are called the sons of God. The sons of the Scots, and the daughters of their kings

(*a*) Matt. xxviii. 19.(*b*) Mark, xvi. 15.(*c*) Joel, ii. 28.(*d*) Osee, ii. 23, 24.

seem to become the monks and the virgins of Christ; nay, even one Scotia, a blessed noble and beautiful young woman, was baptized by me, and after a few days addressed herself to me, and intimated that she had received a warning from God's messenger, who advised her to remain a virgin of Christ, and thus draw nigh to God. Thanks be to God, in six days afterwards she gladly and cheerfully laid hold of that grace, of which all virgins of God are alike partakers; but not, indeed, according to the wishes of their parents, yea, rather from them do they suffer reproaches and persecutions unjustly; and, nevertheless, their number daily increases, so that we cannot keep any account of those of our nation who belong to Christ, not to speak of those who remain widows and unmarried. But even they labor much who are confined in service, and who endure all things patiently, with threats and terrors. But the Lord gave many of his handmaidens this great grace, for notwithstanding the prohibition, they still courageously imitate the example. Now I have the power, if I choose, to leave them, and to proceed into Britain. Although I should most willingly go, as to my country and my parents, and not only so, but I should visit my brethren even in Gaul, and see my acquaintances who are saints in the Lord. Now, the Lord is my witness that all this I did very much desire; but, bound in spirit, there was one who announced to me, that if I should do this I should become guilty in his sight. So I feared to frustrate the labor I have commenced—not I, but the Lord, who commanded me to come and to stay with them for the remainder of my days, if the lord should preserve me from all sin and evil in his sight. Now all this I should hope for; but I trust not in myself, so long as I remain in this body of death. For he is powerful

who is daily struggling to withdraw me from my purpose, and from my chaste desires of unfeigned religion, which purpose I will preserve to the end of my life, in Christ my Lord. But the flesh, always hostile, would bring me to death, that is, to enjoyments that are not to be tasted, but with the loss of eternal happiness. But I partly know that I have not studied eternal life like other believers; but I confess before my Lord—and I do not blush in his sight to proclaim the truth—that from the time I knew him in my youth, his fear and love have been, up to the present time, increasing within me; and, by his grace, I will still continue to preserve ‘he faith.

CHAPTER V.

He testifies with what sincerity he has preached the Gospel—

He enters immediately on the Apostolic work, and a little moved by the reproaches of others, he protests, however, his sincerity amongst the Gentiles, and his contempt of their gifts, nay, his gratuitous administration of the Sacraments, and not without uncalled-for loss and liberal expenditure of his own property; desiring rather to be poor, after the example of Christ, for whom he is anxious to suffer anything, even Martyrdom itself, being assured of the glory which is laid up for him for such a sacrifice.—A repetition of the Confession of St. Patrick.

“In spite of the derision and insolence of all who choose, I will not hold my peace, nor will I conceal the signs and wonders which have been shown to me by the Lord for many years before they happened, as by one who foreknew all things from the

times(*a*) of the world; wherefore, I ought unceasingly give thanks to God, who has so often indulged my foolishness and my negligence.....And though I was appointed the coadjutor of the Lord, he was not angry with me for having withheld my consent, according as it was shown to me by the Spirit, who suggested these things. And the Lord took compassion upon me on account of many thousands, because he saw that my heart was ready; but I was wholly ignorant of my condition what to do, because many were opposed to this mission; and some amongst them exclaimed, and cried out behind my back: "Why does this man obtrude himself into danger amongst enemies who know not the Lord?" not, indeed, through malice, but because they did not relish this expedition of mine, on account of my simplicity, as I can well testify. And I did not immediately acknowledge the grace that was in me; but now, as I ought, it is delightful for me to obey the voice of God. I now simply intimate to my brethren and fellow-labourers, who believed in me, why I have preached, and why I still preach, to confirm their faith. Would to God that you would imitate me in holier things, and do them more wisely. Such will be my glory, for the wisdom of the Son is the glory of the Father.(*b*) God knows, and you also know, how I have conducted myself from my youth(*c*) whilst among you, in faith and truth and sincerity of heart, even towards that people among whom I dwell. I have brought, and I will bring them to the faith. God is my witness that I have circumvented no man, nor, on account of God and his Church, do I intend it, lest I should bring

(*a*) 2 Tim. i. 9.

(*b*) 1 Kings, xii. 2.

(*c*) Prov. x. 1.

persecution upon them and every one of you, and lest through me the name of God should be blasphemed ; because it is written, “ Wo be to that man by whom the name of God should be blasphemed.” For though I am foolish in all things, I have nevertheless endeavoured to preserve myself, even for my Christian brethren, and for the Christian virgins, and for those holy women who gave me their voluntary offerings, and laid down their ornaments on the altar ; and I returned them back again to them, and they were scandalized at me because I did so. But I did so for the hope of immortality, that in all things I might act with caution, so that on no account the unbelievers should reproach me, or even in the least degree upbraid the service of my ministry, nor in the smallest circumstance should afford these unbelievers an opportunity to calumniate or decry me. Now, perhaps, when I baptized so many thousand men, have I expected from any of them even the half of a farthing ? Tell me so, and I will restore it back to them. Or, when the Lord had every where ordained clergymen by my ministry, did I not gratuitously dispense my services amongst them. Again, if I demanded from any of them even the value of a shoe, tell me so, and I will restore it back again to them. I spent myself, that they might comprehend me ; and every where among you I advanced for your sake in many dangers, into distant regions, where nobody before had ever come, to baptize them, or ordain them, or confirm their people in the faith. Now all these things I did by the grace of God, diligently and cheerfully for your salvation. In the mean time I was giving rewards to their kings and to their children, who remained along with me, and nevertheless they seized me, and in that day they sought most anxiously to kill me—but my hour was

not yet come—and they laid hold of myself and all my property, and bound me in chains; and on the fourteenth day the Lord released me from their power, and everything belonging to me was restored back again to me, for the sake of God and my friends, whom I had provided.

“Now you have experienced how much I bestowed amongst those who were in distress in every district, and how frequently I visited them. I am of opinion that I have distributed amongst these men, not less in amount than in value, so that you may enjoy me, and I always enjoy you, in the Lord; for I am not sorry, nor does it satisfy me, as yet to spend and overspend myself for your souls. Behold, I call God to witness in my soul that I lie not, and that I do not write to you for avarice sake, or through flattery, nor that I should enjoy your good esteem; for I am satisfied with the esteem which is not seen, but is believed in the heart. Now, he is faithful who has promised, and never deceives. But I perceive that in this present world I am exalted beyond measure by the Lord, for I did not desire, nor was I worthy, that the Lord should confer such favors on me, for I know most certainly that poverty and calamity are far more suitable to me than riches and pleasures. But Christ the Lord became poor for our sakes.

“But I, miserable and wretched, am possessed of no riches, though I might desire them; but I daily expect either death, or treason, or slavery, or some such misfortune. But I fear none of those things, on account of God’s heavenly promises; for I have thrown myself into the hands of the Almighty, who every where reigns, as the Prophet says, (a) “Cast all your thoughts upon the Lord, and he will comfort you.

(a) Ps. liv. 23.

Behold I now commend my soul to my most faithful God, whose ambassador I am, though unworthy ; but he regards not the person, but has chosen me for his ministry, and has appointed me, one of the least of his servants, to discharge it. But what shall I say, or what shall I promise, to the Lord, who have nothing but what has been given to me ? But he who searcheth both the reins and the heart, will understand how ardently I desire, and how ready I am, to drink of his chalice, as already he has favoured so many others, who love him. Therefore, I pray that my Lord may never suffer me to lose these people, whom he has purchased from the extremities of the earth. I now pray the Lord will grant me the grace of perseverance, and that he would vouchsafe to make me his faithful witness, until the hour of my death, which I will endure for my God. And if by imitation I have done any good for my God, whom I love, I pray Him, to give me the grace, to shed my blood for these converts and captives of his ; and all this I ask, even though I should be deprived of Christian burial, and even though my carcass should be torn in pieces, or should be cast out to be devoured by the birds of the air, or the beasts of the field. For I am certain, if this should befall me, that by the loss of my body I should not lose my soul ; for, without doubt, we shall all rise again on the last day, resplendent as the sun, in the glory of Jesus Christ, by whom we have been redeemed and made his co-heirs, like the sons of God, being made conformable to the creature of his image ; for of him, and by him, and in him, are all things. To him be glory for ever and for ever.—Amen. (a) For with him we shall reign for ever. That sun which we

(a) Rom. xi. 36.

behold, rises daily by his order for our sakes. It will not last for ever, and its splendor shall be dimmed, and all who adore it shall perish unceasingly for all eternity. But we believe and adore Jesus Christ, the true Sun of Justice, who never shall go down, and he who does his will shall not perish, but shall remain for ever and for ever: who reigns eternally with the Father and the Holy Ghost, before all ages, and now and for ever.—Amen.

“Behold, again, I briefly repeat the words of my confession, and I bear witness, in truth and joy, before God and his holy angels, that I had no inducement, but the promises of God and his Gospel, to return back to that people from whom I had escaped. And now I pray all those who believe and seek, and fear the Lord, and who will be pleased to receive, and to read this manuscript, which I, Patrick, though an unlearned sinner, have written in Ireland; I pray all such not to ascribe to my ignorance that I have done any thing, however small, or that I have pointed out any thing; but to unite with the designs of God. Consider me, and most certainly believe, that All is of God. And this is my Confession before I die.”

THE END.